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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Vienna, 14-25 June 1993
Agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12

GENERAL DEBATE ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE
ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ON THE
IDENTIFICATION OF OBSTACLES TO FURTHER PROGRESS IN THIS AREA AND WAYS
IN WHICH THEY CAN BE OVERCOME

CONSIDERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND
THE UNIVERSAL ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, KEEPING IN VIEW THE
INTERRELATIONSHIP AND INDIVISIBILITY OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL,
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

CONSIDERATION OF CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN AND NEW CHALLENGES TO THE
FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MEN, INCLUDING
THOSE OF PERSONS BELONGING TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: (a) STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE
FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS
AND WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS; (b) ENSURING THE
UNIVERSALITY, OBJECTIVITY AND NON-SELECTIVITY OF THE CONSIDERATION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES; (c) ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNITED NATIONS
ACTIVITIES AND MECHANISMS; (d) SECURING THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL AND OTHER
RESOURCES FOR UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Note by the Secretary-General

Letter dated 21 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian
Federation to the International Organizations in Vienna addressed to the
Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights

I have the honour to forward to you the statement of the Foreign Ministry
of the Russian Federation concerning the violation of human rights of the
ethnic Russians in Estonia.

I ask you to distribute it as an official document of the World
Conference on Human Rights in all United Nations official languages.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF RUSSIA

Legislation recently adopted or currently under discussion by the Parliament of Estonia and decisions by local Estonian authorities have led to a serious aggravation of the situation around the Russian troops temporarily stationed in the Estonian Republic and have further exacerbated the plight of the non-indigenous population, particularly Russian-speakers.

We must regretfully accept that the worst fears are coming true: the authorities in Tallinn are heading towards confrontation. The admission of Estonia into the Council of Europe has not been taken as an advance on or incentive to improvements in the situation of the population, but as a "blessing" on the creation of a mono-ethnic state in Estonia. Having passed a discriminatory law which denied the Russian-speaking population the right to be elected to local government bodies, the State Assembly of the Estonian Republic has adopted in first reading a draft law on foreigners which completely disregards the existing realities in the country and proclaims all non-citizens of Estonia to be aliens with no residence permit, i.e. in effect, illegal immigrants. If this law enters into force, hundreds of thousands of people in Estonia will be deprived of social guarantees and doomed to live without political rights; they will face additional obstacles in gaining entitlement to reside and work there. No doubt, this will make the threat of domestic conflict quite real.

Furthermore, unprecedented attempts are being made to put pressure on the Russian military. Tallinn City Council has adopted a decision declaring null and void all documents, including residence registration papers authorizing servicemen and employees of Russian Defence Ministry enterprises to live there. City authorities intend "to arrange for the liberation of the seized apartments in cooperation with the police". Earlier, a similar decision affecting retired Russian servicemen and their families was adopted in the town of Tartu.

These measures are being taken against the background of a hardening Estonian position in the interstate talks, revived territorial claims to Russian lands, and ever more frequent, public anti-Russian statements by Estonian leaders.

Tallinn's policy of confrontation and contrived worsening of relations with Russia may have serious consequences not only for our two countries, but for the Baltic region as a whole. The Estonian side will bear full responsibility for the consequences, whose impact will also be felt by those foreign partners of Estonia who today turn a blind eye to instances of aggressive nationalism in that country and rashly support the dangerous policy pursued by Tallinn.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia calls upon the authorities in the Estonian Republic to display commonsense and statesmanlike wisdom, to stop the slide towards a dangerous stand-off with Russia, and to prevent an inter-ethnic explosion in their own country. We express the hope that all democratic countries and influential international organizations, whose membership requirements Estonia must faithfully comply with, will add their own authoritative voices on this matter.